

Minutes
Skateboard Park Advisory Committee
May 16, 2005

Committee Members Present: Matthew Johnston, Gareth Roe, Dan Hughes, Micah Shapiro, John Carr, Scott Shinn, Jennifer Stephens
Guests: Mark Johnson, Kate Martin, Pam David
Staff: Susan Golub

Agenda Approval: The meeting agenda was approved, with a reversal of the order for items 3 & 4 – the Lower Woodland discussion preceded the Seattle Center Skatepark Replacement discussion, and there was an addition of a West Seattle item.

Public Comment

1. Mark Johnson, River City Skatepark – Mr. Johnson described the effort underway in South Park to privately develop a skatepark. The proposed project is a 15,000 square foot park to be located on Cloverdale in South Park, a neighborhood with a high youth population. SeaMar, a community health center, has donated property for the project and Grindline is donating \$250,000 for design and construction. The community is trying to raise an additional \$166,000 for the project but have run into some problems, primarily the restriction in most public grants that they cannot be given for projects located on private property. Since SeaMar is retaining possession of the property they are donating for the skatepark, River City has found itself ineligible for grants they had anticipated applying for the project.

2. Kate Martin – Ms. Martin displayed graphics and handouts that she has shown to community groups regarding site selection for the Lower Woodland skatepark. In support of locating the park at the Aurora triangle property Ms. Martin noted:

- 85% of skaters are under 18 and need to be in plain sight;
- Between 10 and 20% of skaters are female and facilities should be equally accessible to girls and boys;
- Sites need to welcome all users; and
- We should get the early parks right so that they are welcome in additional neighborhoods in the future.

Lower Woodland Skatepark Siting Discussion

The discussion of the Committee's preferred siting for the Lower Woodland skatepark began with Matt Johnston noting that the May meeting had been planned as the Committee's date to review the siting criteria and vote on a preference. He asked Committee members if they were ready for this task.

Gareth Roe responded with a review of the Committee's involvement with Lower Woodland – the site visit and analysis done by the Lower Woodland subcommittee – and said it was worth following through with the analysis and vote. He noted one aspect he liked about the triangle site is its closeness to the trail around Green Lake, and that parents could drop children off at the skatepark and walk or run around the Lake. He

stated either site can work and that with good design the shade issues at the chip site can be worked out. He stated that parking is an issue for the triangle site and not for the chip site, that the triangle site is closer to a bus stop, but that you can get to the bus from the chip site.

Jennifer Stephens questioned whether the design for the chip site could be flipped such that the bowl was farther from the hillside, having less impact from the shade. Micah Shapiro said that the design was preliminary and could be changed. Ms. Stephens also reported that a representative from the City's Department of Transportation had said they would look into a possible pedestrian crossing at mid-block at the triangle site. She also noted that the triangle site was farther from the BMX bike mounds and that because of this it would not need to be fenced to keep the bike riders out of the skatepark. Other Committee members thought the relative closeness of the two sites would be such that the BMX bike riders would come to the triangle site to ride in the skatepark.

John Carr suggested two ways for the Committee to consider the site evaluation for Lower Woodland:

1. What is the best site for a skatepark from the skaters perspective; or
2. What is the best site for a skatepark considering a broad range of park uses.

From the first point of view, the triangle site is best for skaters. From the second point of view, he noted we face the issues of the bunnies and replacing a green space with skateboard use. John questioned what the job of the Committee is: to recommend the best possible site or to consider politics and competing uses. Jennifer Stephens stated that she did not think the two ways of looking at the issue were mutually exclusive and that the Committee needed to consider the issue from both perspectives.

The Committee discussed whether to proceed with a siting decision at this meeting or to wait for additional public outreach. Matt Johnston stated his view that the Committee's mandate is not to do the siting outreach and that he wanted the Committee to determine their recommendation on their own. He stated that the power of the SPAC is equal to community councils and that he was nervous about delaying the Committee's action. He noted that the outreach can come later.

Mr. Roe supported the group making its decision at this meeting. Mr. Carr noted that making a decision is not contingent on collecting all of the public information, but that it was up to the Committee to recommend the best site. With the recommendation, the Committee could note the need for more community outreach. Mr. Johnston remarked on the irony of the situation – in the skateboarding community the issue is skatepark or no skatepark, not where. The input he is receiving is more on the lines of pro/con for having a park.

Staff to the Committee, Susan Golub, described the early SPAC involvement in the chip site selection, reminding the Committee of the meeting that was held at Green Lake to visit the site and the initial SPAC support.

At this point in the meeting, a citizen who arrived after the public comment period had concluded asked to make some remarks about this issue.

Pam David: Ms. David expressed her concerns about the safety of the chip site and said she doesn't feel it is safe for her eleven year old son (with her at the meeting). She was especially concerned about fencing the site. She said there was no activity currently occurring at the site.

The Committee decided to go around the table expressing their siting preference.

Micah Shapiro stated his view that the triangle was a better site with a scoring of 95/85 triangle v. chip sites. His main issue with the chip site is the lack of sun. His concern with the triangle site is the lack of parking. He is not concerned about "freaks in the woods" because there will be a lot of people at the park once the skatepark is developed.

Jennifer Stephens stated she is pro the triangle site because of safety concerns she has regarding the chip site.

Scott Shinn said his views are presented in a resolution he presented to the Committee. The resolution calls for a delay in the Lower Woodland siting decision until additional public outreach occurs.

Matt Johnston voiced his opinion on the safety issue by stating that no place is perfectly safe, and that while the chip site is less safe, parent's must consider many factors when they decide whether to stay or leave when they drop kids off. He expressed a concern that a Committee endorsement of the triangle site could result in the Board of Park Commissioners deciding that no site is better than the triangle site and the community would lose out. While he likes the environment of the triangle site, he is concerned it may take longer to develop a park there as opposed to the chip site.

A brief discussion occurred regarding the drainage issues at both sites and it was noted that less analysis had been done regarding the drainage issues at the triangle site, especially as it was once used as a landfill. The Committee concluded the drainage issues were a trade-off with issues at both locations.

Gareth Roe stated his preference for the triangle site, but noted that parking is an issue as is road noise. He likes the site because of its adjacency to the lake and the easy access to the lake path. His main concern with the chip site is the shade, but also noted it had better parking.

John Carr stated his narrow preference for the triangle site.

Dan Hughes expressed his preference for the triangle site citing the better visibility and thought it was a "cool location." He also noted that you can't ask a skatepark to keep kids out of trouble – that parents' involvement was necessary.

John Carr agreed to write a letter to the Park Department describing the Committee's action. He will include in the letter the Committee's preference for the triangle site, but that they also want to keep the chip site on the table.

Lower Woodland IAC Grant

Ms. Golub described the action at the State Legislature regarding the City's IAC grant application for the Lower Woodland skatepark. The overall budget adopted by the State legislature included enough funding for Lower Woodland; however, a budget proviso that was passed gave preference to acquisition projects over development projects. The impact of the proviso was that five development projects, including Lower Woodland, were skipped over for three lower ranking acquisition projects.

Lower Woodland is the first alternative, meaning that if any funding is freed up, it would be allocated first to Lower Woodland. In past rounds of IAC funding, the first alternative has received money, but the timing and amount are unknowns.

545 Elliott Avenue – Seattle Center Skatepark Replacement Site

Susan Golub reported on the progress regarding the replacement of the Seattle Center skatepark at 545 Elliott Avenue. The City is continuing negotiations with King County and is looking at both purchase and lease options. Work is underway in the Department's Planning and Development Division to begin the initial design outline for the park.

Membership

Diane Cortese, Mark Tagal and Chris Farrar all resigned from the Committee. Roxanne Thomas, a West Seattle parent of skateboarders, was mentioned as a possible new member.

Committee Business

1. Langston Hughes: John Carr reported on the work he has been doing to help the Langston Hughes summer skateboarding project get connected with people in the community that can provide assistance to the project. Micah Shapiro has been helping with design.
2. Policy Rewrite: Gareth Roe indicated his commitment to help revise the Department's Skateboard Park Policy, noting especially the need to update the siting criteria.
3. West Seattle: The Committee discussed their interest in looking for a site for a skatepark in West Seattle. Ms. Golub will coordinate a meeting with the SPAC West Seattle subcommittee and Department south district staff who have done some preliminary site assessments.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00.

